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ABSTRACT

The methodology reported in this paper argues for a synthesis of various theories and methods. First, a synopsis is given of the pedagogical and linguistic approaches that should underlie a successful attempt to teach the contrast in two verb tenses in Portuguese. Secondly, a contrast unique to Portuguese is examined and a multistage approach for teaching the contrast is suggested. The theories and approaches reviewed are: (1) Roman Jakobson's model of the speech event, a model that stresses the multifaceted nature of the speech event; (2) the notional-functional approach, which stresses the interaction of social context and grammatical form; (3) contributions of American linguistics, especially structuralism and Chomsky's generative theory; and (4) the audiolingual approach. The second part of the paper examines the preterite vs. the present perfect contrast and suggests a sequence for presenting these two tenses based on the theories discussed. It is suggested that the tenses be taught first in isolation, then the contrast between them and finally the task of integrating the tenses into the overall tense system. Numerous examples are provided. (AMH)

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The Interplay of Code, Message and Context in the Acquisition of Portuguese Syntax *

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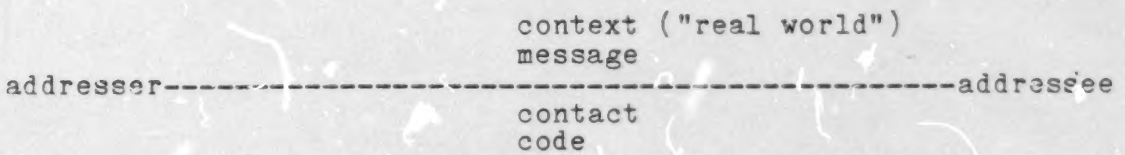
Introduction

Linguists and language teachers have a tradition of regarding each other with mutual skepticism. As one or another linguistic theory comes into vogue, certain FL specialists and linguists may proclaim it as a pedagogical panacea which is to render obsolete the theoretical and methodological baggage that preceded it. Teachers understandably grow weary of each new miracle model, while certain linguists ultimately disavow any pedagogical relevance for their particular stance.

Written with such excesses in mind, this paper will argue for a synthesis of various theories and methods. We will demonstrate our position by looking at the problems involved in teaching a verb tense contrast unique to Portuguese. Before examining this contrast, we will give a synopsis of the pedagogical and linguistic approaches that we feel should underlie a successful attempt to teach the contrast.

Meaning and the Speech Event

Most approaches differ in the emphasis they place on various aspects of the speech situation and in how they address the relation between form and meaning. Let us first consider the most inclusive theoretical model, that of Roman Jakobson. For Jakobson, any speech event could be broken down into six aspects:



Spoken and written language invariably consist of a message produced by an addresser and directed at an addressee. What is communicated will be shaped by the (extralinguistic) context, the contact (e.g. oral, visual, electronic, etc.), the code (i.e. the system per se) and elements within the message itself (linguistic context). Jakobson, of course, was not the only linguist to stress the multi-faceted nature of the speech event. He was, however, one of the few to see meaning as determined by all these factors, and it is this holistic stance that we advocate for teaching even points that seem restricted to grammar, i.e. the

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code.

Since verb tenses appear at first to be a grammatical issue par excellence, let us take a closer look at how Jakobson viewed the code. Following Ferdinand de Saussure, he insisted on approaching language not as a collection of separate elements, but as a system wherein elements can be adequately defined only in terms of their relations with each other. This structuralist orientation is especially helpful when we are faced with teaching a number of verb tenses. Any Romance language instructor knows the difficulty of teaching the distinction between past imperfect and past perfect. In isolation, each tense is not especially problematic: the real test is whether the student can manipulate both in the same speech event. The total picture wherein the successful student must manipulate over a dozen tenses is indeed a formidable accomplishment. For Jakobson and our ideal student, none of these tenses can be truly understood until one has been able to relate each one to all the others. In the code, each tense is defined through a constant feature or set of features which keeps it invariably distinct in meaning from all other tenses. Jakobson believed in formal determinism, i.e. a difference in form inevitably signals a difference in meaning, where 'meaning' is to be taken in its broadest sense, ranging from gross, real-world differences (e.g. present vs. past) to nuances like formality level distinctions (e.g. tinha feito vs. havia feito). This one-to-one relation between form and meaning is easy to see with most occurrences of verb tenses--the presence of a verb ending suffices to convey its invariant meaning, regardless of whether there are 'lubricators' present, such as a certain time adverb. Even if in a given context, either the preterit or imperfect is possible, the use of one or the other will never be indifferent. The invariant semantic value of each will ensure that a different meaning is always conveyed, depending on the tense selected. The tendency of certain adverbs to favor certain tenses, e.g. geralmente giving rise to the imperfect, would for Jakobson be a facet not of code but of message. In other words, there is no rule specifying that the imperfect and not preterit must occur with geralmente. The high frequency of this occurrence would be explained through semantic compatibility of the co-occurring elements. The possibility of using an adverb of habitualness with the preterit, e.g. in:

(1) Você geralmente foi gentil comigo enquanto nós morávamos juntos.

bears out Jakobson's position that many combinations are not built into the code. On the practical side, this holistic, meaning-based approach has its analogue in notional-functional methodology.

The Notional-Functional Approach

For many decades in this century, foreign-language teaching has been characterized by a preoccupation with methodological issues. The many "methods", however, share a single feature which is the primacy of form over meaning or function. The notional-functional approach to syllabus design and materials construction differs from them in that it starts from a consideration of which speech-acts or functions (e.g. approval, agreement, apology, etc.) the learners will need or want to use in the target language. The term "notional" itself is taken from linguistics, where it is used to refer to grammars written according to semantic criteria (as in traditional grammars) as opposed to formal criteria (as in transformational-generative grammar).

While a meaning-based linguistic analysis is concerned with the ways in which the forms are used for communicative purposes, a formal linguistic analysis is strictly concerned with the observable, actually occurring forms of language and the relationships between them. It is true, however, that semantic theories have not kept pace with syntactic advancement in recent decades . The result is that notional syllabuses, heavily dependent on semantic descriptions and discourse features, cannot yet make use of an integral, formally adequate body of theoretical knowledge on which to base all their decisions. A noteworthy exception is the pioneering Communicative Grammar of English by Svartvik and Leech 1978.

Lately, researchers of language-in-use have insisted on a more global and functional approach in their descriptions. For example, Kinneavy 1971 and Winterowd 1975 make use of Jakobson's views on language functions to restate what the aims of discourse analysis are. Hymes 1970 has attracted the attention of researchers, materials designers and teachers by drawing a distinction between linguistic competence (with which we generate grammatical sentences) and communicative competence (with which we create appropriate utterances in contexts of real language interaction). However, relatively little is known about how social context and grammatical forms interact. This does not mean that the language teacher will have to sit down and wait until theoretical advances are made before he can produce better curricula and materials to help students learn languages. Our paper will later suggest exercises simulating the interplay of grammar with social contexts as possible avenues to communicative fluency.

Finally, Widdowson 1979 has denied that notional syllabuses can account for communicative competence as suggested by Wilkins 1976 on the grounds that they do not represent language as discourse of participants in verbal interaction. He argues that

notional curricula have the same design fault which characterizes grammatical syllabuses: being simply inventories of language units in isolation and abstraction. The suggestion here is that only a developed theory of discourse showing how communicative functions relate to larger speech events will allow the ideal of the notional-functionalist movement to come into being in our classrooms. Widdowson recognizes, however, that notional-functionalism has come "to sharpen our perception of what is required of a syllabus if it is to develop communicative competence in learners." (Widdowson 1979:p. 249)

Distributionalism in American Linguistics

Substitution drills, cues to trigger a given grammatical element, and defining a form purely in terms of its environment: all these reflect the influence of American linguistics as practiced for about the last fifty years. The early years of linguistics in this country had one overriding imperative: to record and describe as many dying native languages as possible. Not surprisingly, theoretical concerns centered on the more immediately accessible aspects of language like the sound system and basic grammatical forms. Subtler areas like meaning and style would of necessity take a back seat. The theoretical orientation that emerged from the extensive field work was therefore highly positivistic, with a reliance on operational definitions and a conviction that meaning was somehow beyond the task of the language scientist because it was too fuzzy to treat objectively. The American structuralists of the 30's, 40's and 50's worked with an essentially taxonomic approach: they saw their task as one of providing an inventory of the phonemes and morphemes, i.e. basic units of sound, grammar and vocabulary. They usually discarded the legacy inherited from traditional grammar. Rather than nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc., defined in notional (semantic) terms, they sought out 'form classes', syntactic categories defined distributionally, i.e. in terms of other forms they were found with. For example, a certain form class in English would be that which could occur with -s and -ed. Another would be defined as combinable with function words like the or a. The rationale was that each language brings out its own particular criteria for pinning down such grammatical categories, the traditional parts of speech being at best appropriate for Greek and Latin, the languages of their inventors. Fries and Lado were the most prominent exponents of this approach for ESL purposes. As Lyons 1977:423-452 points out, though, most 'form classes' coincide well with the traditional labels, and in their search for universal properties of language, most linguists today wouldn't hesitate to use classifications inherited from antiquity.

Even though Chomsky viewed his generative theory as a

radically different approach from American structuralism, he maintained the fundamental skepticism toward meaning. In fact, the main characteristic setting the Chomskyan paradigm apart from other generative alternatives is precisely this view of meaning as peripheral. Through all the evolving stages of his model, Chomsky has relegated semantics to ancillary status, as a sector appended to the main syntactic component. Syntax has remained central to Chomsky's view of language. While it is vastly more refined under him than it was prior to generative theory, we notice in his work a continuing distributionalist orientation: one still defines element x via the company it keeps, rather than via x's internal makeup, i.e. the semantic features signaled regardless of context. We will see that both views, the distributionalist and the semantic, are needed for teaching verb tenses.

Structuralism's Pedagogical Counterpart: The Audio-Lingual Approach

Audio-lingual methods have been described as outcomes of the marriage between American structuralist linguistics and behaviorist psychology. Prototypically, the audio-lingual course designer had first to break up the (complex) target language into discrete parts of structural units which would then be taught on a step-by-step basis through repetition of and substitutions in sentence frames. The gradual build-up of parts would eventually lead to the reconstruction of the language by the learner. A final synthesis of the grammatical content is then implicitly taken to be the ultimate goal of the teaching process.

Both selection and grading criteria were at first largely subjective and unspecified. Textbooks produced later in the course of audio-lingualism have made these criteria more and more explicit. Over the years there were developed commonly accepted criteria for the application of the grammatical approach. For example, to select and grade grammatical structures, such criteria as simplicity, regularity, frequency and contrastive difficulty were often used. These were made to interact, on a trade-off basis, with pedagogical criteria such as social utility, probability of occurrence, usefulness in the classroom, and item-teachability.

The major criticisms of audio-lingual curricula and materials include the following:

(a) the language learning process is not completed when grammatical content has been mastered;

(b) grammatical sentences do not necessarily mean contextually appropriate utterances;

(c) elements of grammatical description tend to be taught just because they exist (their relevance being overlooked);

(d) grammatical curricula do not facilitate comparability of curricula for different languages;

(e) they do not allow sensitivity to the differing conditions of learning;

(f) they are hardly a reliable instrument for checking validity of tests; and

(g) dialogues which are meant to present and illustrate grammatical points are not a preparation for communication in real life.

The Case in Point

We will illustrate the utility of integrating these various theories and methods by examining a contrast unique to Portuguese: the pretérito (pretérito perfeito simples) vs. the presente perfeito (preterito perfeito composto). The traditional labels, given in parentheses, are from Cunha 1966. The pretérito is the main tense occurring in past event narrations. It occurs in the speech of all social classes, at all formality levels, from bar conversations among illiterate factory workers to the most erudite literature. Because of its social universality and its crucial role in narration, it is rightfully one of the first tenses to be taught.

The presente perfeito has a much more limited function in Portuguese than its formal analogues in other Romance languages. It conveys that the verbal process

(a) began in the past,
(b) has relevance to the present, and
(c) is recurrent.

(c) is the peculiarly Portuguese aspect of this tense. Even within Portuguese, though, in its function the presente perfeito is an oddity: no other compound tense has this specification of recurrence. The pluperfect, for example, is virtually identical in use to its English and Romance counterparts, and the present perfect subjunctive often denotes a single past event, e.g.

(2) É lamentável que tenham desistido.

Probably because of this extra feature [recurrent], the presente perfeito is far less frequent than the pretérito (cf. Hutchins 1975). Sociolinguistically, it is also more restricted, its

incidence rising with formality level and amount of education. We will see the effect of such social and functional markedness in the integration exercises to be discussed. In view of its lower frequency, we recommend that the presente perfeito be one of the later tenses presented, as is usually the case.

Audio-lingual manuals distinguish the two tenses via lubricators: ontem, no ano passado, por cinco meses, nunca, etc. for the preterito, while the presente perfeito is linked to adverbs of recent past time like nestes dias, neste ano, ultimamente, nos últimos meses. Yet, co-occurrence of these lubricators with the presente perfeito is not categorical, as we see in the following minimal pairs:

(3a) A burocracia brasileira já se simplificou nos últimos meses. 'They simplified/have simplified Brasilian bureaucracy in recent months.
(3b) A burocracia brasileira tem se simplificado nos últimos meses. 'They have simplified/have been simplifying Brazilian bureaucracy in recent months.

(4a) Você pensou muito nisso? 'Did you think/Have you thought much about that?'
(4b) Você tem pensado muito nisso? 'Have you thought/Have you been thinking much about that?'

These examples show that the translation correspondences are clearcut at the extremes. The English simple past would be rendered with the pretérito (other possibilities like the imperfect being irrelevant for now), while the English present perfect progressive would correspond to the presente perfeito. The interesting case is the English present perfect, which may come out as either pretérito or presente perfeito. If the speaker views the verbal process as recurrent, e.g. where 'have simplified' entails 'have been simplifying', the proper translation will be the presente perfeito. Otherwise, the pretérito will be the correct choice. Teachers may present this at first as a translation rule of thumb, but ultimately the student must attend directly to the codal feature [recurrent] as the distinguishing key.

The Learning Stages

We will now suggest a sequence for presenting these two tenses, taking into account the theories and methods discussed. We see the learning task as comprising three major phases. The student must assimilate:

I The forms and meaning of each tense in isolation.

II The semantic contrast between them.

III The semantic contrast between them and other tenses, notably the present and imperfect, which we assume have both been introduced by the time the presente perfeito is taken up.

I Forms and Meaning of Each Tense in Isolation

For Jakobson, form and meaning are inextricably linked in the code of a native speaker. The acquisition process, however, must clearly have form take precedence over meaning initially. This is especially true for the Portuguese verb system, given its rich variation in both stems and endings. The student should at first focus on form, with meaning and social function being of secondary importance. The audio-lingual approach is therefore the order of the day in this initial stage, since substitution drills are ideal for making the student aware of the complex inflectional variation. Distributional definitions are also appropriate, since the lubricators associated with a given tense are important cues for helping the student pinpoint its intrinsic meaning. The grammar-translation method too has a part to play here, since meaning may be introduced through a simple gloss, followed by a warning about how glosses are only rough approximations.

A. Pretérito Learning Sequence

1. Give paradigm.
2. Brief explanation of its meaning, via a gloss or entirely in Portuguese via lubricators.
3. Substitution drills to practice subject-verb agreement, with different past-time adverbs. Providing a social context is optional at this stage. Irregular stems should be staggered, even into the later contrastive stages. As each new verb is presented, practice should not only dwell on morphological oddities but also integrate it into functional and semantic concepts already taught. This technique of 'spiraling' is discussed in Martin 1978.
4. Communication Exercises. For example:

A. Você conhece um rapaz ou uma garota numa festa. Faça-lhe perguntas de acordo com o modelo:

assistir ao Carnaval de Georgetown
Resposta: Você já assistiu ao Carnaval de Georgetown?
Seu colega deve responder a verdade, por exemplo:
Não, eu nunca assisti
ou:
Sim, assisti no ano passado.

1. resolver ir jantar em Nova Iorque
2. fazer camping no inverno
3. tomar cerveja brasileira
4. experimentar guaraná
5. sentir vontade de fugir para o Tahiti
6. preparar uma feijoada
7. sentir falta dos seus pais

This exercise is entirely in Portuguese. Yet, it incorporates contrastive analysis, since the preterit verb in all examples corresponds to the English present perfect (e.g. 'Have you ever attended...). The teacher may not even have to point out this difference immediately, since the situation makes it apparent to most students after only a few examples. We have found that it is often more effective to let students discover such correspondences for themselves, which they will do provided the exercises are set up properly.

B. Presente Perfeito Learning Sequence

Same sequence as pretérito, except for using lubricators like "recentemente" and "nestes dias" in substitution drills. The following is a communication exercise which requires the student to think up a brief explanation for his affirmative answer.

B. Seu colega não vai bem. Faça-lhe perguntas utilizando as palavras sugeridas. Ele deve responder afirmativamente dando uma breve explicação.

Modelo: trabalhar muito.

Resposta: --Você tem tabalhado muito?
--Tenho, sim, porque preciso de um dinheirão para comprar esse computador.

1. ir dormir tarde
2. ser convidado para muitas festas
3. passar o dia todo na biblioteca
4. beber café demais
5. fumar muito
6. ?

People differ widely in their ability and willingness to exhibit this kind of creativity, but if such open-ended responses are required often enough, even the more timid students will get used to ad-libbing. Needless to say, the instructor should use his discretion regarding mistakes in the creative part of this exercise.

So far, each tense has been treated in isolation. We assume that the pretérito will be presented long before the presente perfeito. In the interval, the student will learn to distinguish the pretérito from other tenses, notably imperfect and present, the latter used where the action began in the past but is still going on, as in

(5) Faz tempo que estou cansado. 'I've been tired for some time.'

II Contrast Stage

Once the student has mastered both tenses individually, he faces the often neglected task of keeping them apart, i.e. of knowing which one to select in a given situation. Up till this point, he has relied mainly on lubrication cues. As we have seen, though, the discourse may or may not contain such cues and many lubricators do not co-occur exclusively with the tense they are habitually linked with. It is at this stage that distributionalism should be supplemented with a Jakobsonian approach to the code. By 'Jakobsonian' is meant a reliance on a verb tense's intrinsic meaning, which is a vital key as to whether a given tense is appropriate in a given context.

To drive home a point previously brought up, we will look at a pair of English sentences containing the same tense:

(6) Paulo hasn't done his homework, so he can't go out this afternoon.
(7) It hasn't rained much, so the peasants are worried.

To select correctly pretérito or presente perfeito requires the student to discern whether or not the action in each sentence is recurrent. In (6), recurrence is unlikely, because the result clause comprises a one-time interdiction. Thus, the best translation would be

(6a) Paulo não fez a tarefa dele, então não pode sair hoje à tarde.

The presente perfeito nao tem feito would correspond to 'hasn't been doing'. In (7) the lack of rain is clearly an ongoing state of affairs and so the presente perfeito is the correct choice:

Não tem chovido muito, então os camponeses estão preocupados.

The pretérito choveu would be appropriate only if the event were regarded somehow as unconnected to the present. Such contrasts not only bring out the dangers of automatic, uncritical

translation, they also force the student to perceive the presence or absence of the crucial distinguishing feature. For those teachers adverse to translation, the same principles can be demonstrated via minimal pairs in Portuguese alone. For example,

Paulo não tem feito a tarefa.
Paulo não fez a tarefa.

could be presented as a kind of explication exercise. The student would have to elaborate on the tense chosen, e.g.

Paulo não fez a tarefa que o professor deu para hoje.
vs.
Paulo não tem feito a tarefa nestes dias porque tem tido muito trabalho na loja.

Exercises in this contrastive stage should therefore incorporate insights from both contrastive analysis and a notional-functional orientation, in order to make such translation a socially plausible activity rather than a sterile academic rite. Reflecting this double perspective are the following:

C. Seu amigo não fala português, mas ele quer conhecer uma garota paulistana que só fala português. Você deve portanto servir de interprete, perguntando para ela se: (A garota responde "Já, sim" ou "Ainda não".)

1. she's ever wanted to live in the U.S. ("Você já quis morar...?")
2. she's ever been to the Rio Carnival.
3. she's ever visited the Amazon.
4. she's ever come to the U.S. by boat.
5. she's ever seen the Air and Space Museum.
6. she's ever eaten at the Café de Ipanema.
7. she's ever thought about studying in Washington.
8. ?

D. Faz muito tempo que você não vê seu amigo. Ele reaparece um dia e claro que você quer saber o que ele tem feito. Pergunte para ele em português:

1. Have you been working hard? ("Você tem trabalhado muito?")
2. Have you been going to bed late?
3. Have you been going to a lot of parties?
4. Have you been spending much time at the library?
5. Have you been drinking a lot?
6. ?

E. Seu/Sua colega está muito pálido/pálida e você quer saber o

porquê. Faça para ele/ela as perguntas seguintes:

1. Have you had too much to drink?
2. Have you not gotten enough sleep these days?
3. Have you had to work 12 hours a day again?
4. Have you been fighting again with your girlfriend/boyfriend?
5. Have you been trying to give up smoking again?
6. Have you been at Cecília's much?
7. ?

The content of these and other exercises reflects our own preference for combining culturally appropriate material (e.g. Carnaval, guaraná) with slightly offbeat topics like going camping in winter or flying to New York City for dinner. The teacher could replace the translation format with skeletal sentences, e.g. 'sentir falta/pais', where the student must fill in appropriate endings and prepositions.

The next phase in this contrastive stage entails a transition from isolated question/answer sequences to discourse. Exercise F, given below, is based on a highly plausible situation in Brazil, the problem of procuring an exit visa in a hurry. The student must choose either of the two tenses under study. The correct choice requires not only attending to lubricators such as nos últimos meses, but also full comprehension of the message to determine whether the feature [recurrent] is likely to be present.

F. Diálogo contrastivo. (Pretérito simples vs. pretérito composto)

Situação: Ricardo se vê obrigado a sair do Brasil no dia seguinte porque o pai dele sofre um ataque cardíaco nos Estados Unidos. Aqui está a sua conversa com Susana sobre o que fazer para se conseguir um passaporte com tanta urgência.

Susana: Você já_____(viajar) para o exterior alguma vez?

Ricardo: Não e por isso tenho medo. Quando o papai_____(sair) do país 3 anos atrás, ele quase_____(perder) o avião por causa da burocracia. Dizem que ultimamente a coisa_____(tornar-se) mais simples, mas eu nunca_____(gostar) de despachante.

Susana: Olha Ricardo, nao se preocupe tanto, que o processo já _____(ficar) bem menos complicado nos últimos meses. Meus tios, por exemplo, _____(ter) que sair com urgência para Lisboa no mes passado. Eles_____(ir) logo tirar fotos que_____ (deixar) com o despachante, seu

Teobaldo. Ele se_____(ocupar) de todo o resto--
_____(levar) os papeis para ser encarimbados,
_____(apresentar) a declaração de imposto de renda,
_____(conseguir) o atestado de antecedentes policiais.
Claro que_____(cobrar) uma fortuna porque
_____(fazer) tudo isso em menos de 24 horas.

Ricardo: Mais um motivo de preocupação. Ultimamente eu
_____(gastar) um dinheirão em livros e discos. Sempre
_____(ouvir) dizer que despachante e ladrão, ainda mais em caso de urgência. Felizmente, eu já_____(tirar) as fotos ontem.

Susana: Ah, mas essas não_____(ser) para passaporte, não é? Você tem que tirar novamente por que só aceitam fotos de certas dimensões.

Ricardo: Que sorte a minha. Eu nunca me_____(dar) bem com a burocracia e estou vendo que nada_____(mudar).

The marked nature of the presente perfeito clearly emerges here. Virtually all the blanks where it fits could also have the pretérito, but not vice-versa, e.g.:

Ultimamente eu gastei/tenho gasto um dinheirão.
BUT: Você nunca viajou/?!tem viajado para o exterior?

The final phase comprises open-ended communication. In functional terms, the two tenses are most likely to alternate in dialogues involving topics relevant to the recent past and present. Pure narration of past events (e.g. "Tell your partner what you did on Sunday") is less suitable because the presente perfeito is unlikely to arise there. In the spirit of the exercises already given, sugested themes include meeting somebody new at a party, a job interview, explaining to a friend or spouse why one is in such a bad mood, finding somebody in the class who has done things both usual and strange (who has been to another country, who has never been late for class, who has ever watched TV all night). Students will have no trouble finding appropriate contexts for the pretérito, but the teacher will have to insist on some minimum use of the presente perfeito. This is where group work goes over very well, with the teacher acting as facilitator and making spot checks to ensure that students have mastered the contrast.

III Integration into the Overall Tense System

Let us assume that the student is now able to select correctly the pretérito and presente perfeito, when this is the

only choice he is faced with. He must next learn to pick out these two tenses from among every other one so far learned. All too often this stage has been ignored, yet we can claim successful learning has occurred only if the student's behavior simulates that of a native speaker's, i.e. only if he is able to zero in on what is usually a single correct tense selected from an entire inventory. Exercise G expands this inventory to four:

G. Preencher os espaços com um dos tempos seguintes: pretérito, imperfeito, presente, presente composto.

Já faz dois dias que eu_____(estar) de cama por causa da gripe. Eu_____(perceber) não ir bem já no sábado à noite, quando a gente _____(estar) jantando com 2 convidados. Parece que nestes dias todo mundo_____(ficar) resfriado ou gripado, devido ao tempo frio e chuvoso que_____(fazer). Quando a minha mulher Dorotea _____(notar) que eu não_____(estar) bem, ela_____(usar) isso como um pretexto genial para nos despedir das visitas, o que me_____ (permitir) ir deitar antes das 10 horas. Desde esse jantar, eu_____ (sentir-se) péssimo;_____(ter) dor de cabeça, não_____(parar) de tossir, e não_____(entender) por que o médico ainda não_____(vir) me ver. Hoje de manhã eu_____(ligar) para avisar ao chefe que não_____(poder) ir trabalhar, mas a secretária me_____(dizer) que ele_____(estar) doente e que _____(contar) comigo para fechar o negócio mais importante na história da empresa. De repente o meu estado_____(piorar) sensivelmente, e eu_____(ter) de desligar. Até esse maldito telefonema, eu sempre_____(levar) bem a sério o meu trabalho, mas nem_____(querer) pensar mais nele desde esta manhã.

Here especially is where the student must combine message and code to arrive at the proper choices. Here too is where the student must confront the possibility of more than one correct choice, as when the presente perfeito may be replaced by the presente:

> Nestes dias todo mundo está ficando resfriado ou gripado, devido ao tempo tão frio e chuvoso que faz/está fazendo.

He should, however, be aware that the meaning of each tense maintains its distinctness even though both may fit the same slot.

Eventually, the student will have to put himself in the native speaker's position, being able to select correctly from the full repertory of tenses. This is much easier said than done. Unless deliberate spiraling is built into the curriculum,

learning will take place in compartmentalized fashion, the result bearing little resemblance to the fully developed system with all its elements interrelated. An exercise such as H presupposes mastery of both elements and system.

H. Preencher os espaços com qualquer tempo que convenha.

Situação: João Carlos está se apresentando ao chefe do Departamento de Português de Georgetown para uma entrevista para contratação de um professor de língua e literatura portuguesas.

Chefe do Departamento: O senhor _____(ser) candidato à vaga de professor de língua e literatura portuguesas?

J. Carlos: Correto.

C.D.: O senhor já_____(ensinar) essas matérias antes?

J. Carlos: Já, sim senhor. Eu_____(lecionar) literatura portuguesa por dois anos e _____(estar) ensinando língua portuguesa na Universidade Católica de São Paulo desde 1980.

C.D.: O senhor _____(morar) em algum país de língua inglesa antes?

C.D.: Não senhor, nunca. Esta _____(ser) a primeira vez se eu _____ (conseguir) este emprego.

C.D.: Quando o senhor ensinava literatura, quais _____(ser) alguns dos pontos que_____(constar) do seu programa?

J. Carlos: Bem, eu_____(iniciar)com uma unidade sobre a criação literária e depois nós _____(estudar) a literatura moderna de Portugal.

C.D.: Para ensinar língua, que métodos o senhor_____(usar) em sua universidade?

J. Carlos: Vários e sempre a tônica _____(ser) em comunicação e atividades praticas de uso e não apenas na norma gramatical.

C.D.: Muito bem. A sua entrevista _____(ser) proveitosa. Nós _____ (ter) interesse em sua contratação. Mas gostaria que alguns professores do nosso departamento também o _____(entrevistar). _____(Aguardar) um momento, por favor.

Finally, the acid test occurs with semi- and unstructured communication exercises. Situations with potential for conflict are especially suited to drawing the student out of his

protective grammatical shell. An argument between a passenger and customs official, a lovers' quarrel, a scene between a father and child who refuses to take a summer job: such topics are ideal for making the student place more of his attention on content and less on code. The degree to which he has mastered the code determines how easily he can "forget" about it and concentrate on the message like any native speaker. The teacher can structure such activities as he sees fit, of course, such as by providing essential vocabulary, dehydrated sentences. plus instructions to use particular tenses a minimum number of times.

Conclusion

We have seen how this one fragment of the code, the pretérito/presente perfeito contrast ties in with both the message and social context. Like intonation, forms of address, and speech acts, our particular example validates Jakobson's holistic view that most, if not all linguistic phenomena are shaped by more than one aspect of the speech event.

We see an interesting parallel between the linguistic and social sides of FL competence. Linguistically, we strive for a progression from habits, audio-lingual style, to an assimilation of all oppositions in the system as functionalists view it. Socially, our goal is to move the student from performing in the often neutral, simplified classroom environment to real world competence, i.e. being able to perform under stress, defending one's viewpoint no matter how heated the argument, manipulating the code while angry, worried or ecstatic. This is the kind of development that Rassias' Dartmouth Method tries to hasten, and while we don't advocate throwing raw meat at the student to elicit an emotional reaction, we think it an excellent idea to "socialize" grammar as much as possible.

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